

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SCCT-01

SY-05 /059 W

----- 071959

R 071736Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8544

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: HELMUT KOHL ON THE STUMP

BEGIN SUMMARY: HELMUT KOHL IS WINDING UP HIS CAMPAIGN IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ IN THE HOPE THAT AN IMPRESSIVE VICTORY IN THE LAND ELECTION MARCH 9 WILL PUT HIM OUT FRONT IN HIS EFFORTS TO WIN THE NOMINATION AS CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE. WHILE THE MINISTER PRESIDENT WAS CAREFUL IN HIS RHEINLAND-PFALZ CAMPAIGN SPEECHES SPECIFICALLY NOT TO MENTION THE NATIONAL NOMINATION (NOR DID HIS PARTY FRIENDS WHEN INTRODUCING HIM), HE DID STRESS NATIONAL ISSUES AND RECENTLY ARRANGED FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES TO FOLLOW HIM ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL. FOLLOWING THE KIDNAPPING OF PETER LORENZ HE NOW OPENS HIS SPEECHES WITH AN ATTACK ON THE SPD AND THE BONN GOVERNMENT'S

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INTERNAL SECURITY POLICY. EVEN IN THE HEART OF KOHL

COUNTRY BEFORE SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCES, HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT ELICIT AN ENTHUSIASTIC AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSE. KOHL IS MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE IN OFF-THE-RECORD DISCUSSIONS WITH SMALL GROUPS. WHILE HE IS AN ATTRACTIVE, REASONABLE AND INTELLIGENT POLITICIAN, HE DOES NOT HAVE THE DYNAMIC AND TOUGH PERSONALITY OF CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT. END SUMMARY

1. IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE KOHL'S NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMAGE THE CDU ARRANGED A SPECIAL MEDIA TOUR WITH KOHL MARCH 5 FOR FOREIGN AND NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS. THE GROUP, WHICH INCLUDED AN EMBASSY OFFICER, FOLLOWED KOHL ON THE STUMP FROM EARLY AFTERNOON TO LATE IN THE NIGHT. KOHL'S EXCURSION INTO THE HEART OF CDU TERRITORY (DAUN, BITBURG AND TRIER) IN THE RHINELAND-PALATINATE REVEALED BOTH HIS STRENGTHS AND HIS WEAKNESSES AS A "POTENTIAL" NATIONAL CANDIDATE. SPEAKING BEFORE SYMPATHETIC CROWDS, MANY OF WHOM WORE KOHL CAMPAIGN BUTTONS, KOHL'S APPROACH WAS INTELLIGENT AND REASONABLE, BUT DID NOT GENERATE ENTHUSIASM OR EXCITEMENT.

2. KOHL OPENED HIS SET SPEECH WITH EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION FOR THE SOLIDARITY SHOWN BY ALL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN GERMANY IN THE PETER LORENZ' KIDNAPPING AND SPECIFICALLY THANKED THE BERLIN SENATE AND PASTOR ALBERTZ. THAT SAID, HE LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE SPD AND THE GOVERNMENT FOR HAVING MINIMIZED THE DANGER OF POLITICAL TERROR IN GERMANY IN THE PAST AND CALLED FOR CHANGES IN THE LAW TO COPE WITH THESE GROUPS WHICH USE VIOLENCE OR THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE TO OBTAIN POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC IN HIS RECOMMENDATIONS BUT CITED AS PROOF OF THE FUZZY THINKING IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEM, THE DEBATE AMONG INTELLECTUALS AS TO WHETHER THE BAADER-MEINHOF TERRORIST

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DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SCCT-01

SY-05 /059 W

----- 072000

R 071736Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8545
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
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AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
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ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE CALLED A GROUP OR A GANG AND THE DISCUSSION AMONG SOME CLERGYMEN AS TO WHETHER VIOLENCE AGAINST PROPERTY, SO LONG AS IT WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST PEOPLE, WAS MORALLY DEFENSIBLE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT HIS AUDIENCES RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO KOHL'S REMARKS ABOUT INTERNAL SECURITY. HE ALSO TOOK THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO TASK FOR STATEMENTS THAT THE ELECTION OF A CDU/CSU NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD RESULT IN SOCIAL UNREST IN GERMANY, AND HE WAS PARTICULARLY HARSH IN HIS CRITICISM OF HEINZ KUEHN'S RECENT REMARKS THAT THE TERRORISTS HAD KIDNAPPED PETER LORENZ IN ORDER TO HELP THE CDU IN BERLIN AND THEREBY TO POLARIZE GERMAN POLITICS.

3. FOLLOWING THE CAMPAIGN SPEECHES KOHL MET WITH THE PRESS WHICH HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM FOR AN ONE AND A HALF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOURLY OFF-THE-RECORD DISCUSSION OVER DINNER. HIS HANDLING OF THE QUESTIONS IN A THOUGHTFUL AND RELAXED MANNER WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE AND IT WAS APPARENT THAT HE IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN SUCH A SETTING THAN HE IS AS A POLITICAL ORATOR.

4. IT WAS CLEAR THAT KOHL REALIZES THAT INTERNAL SECURITY HAS BECOME A "GUT ISSUE" WHICH COULD BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE CDU. AT THE SAME TIME, HE TRIES TO STAKE OUT A MODERATE POSITION, CALLING FOR MORE SECURITY AND MORE DEMOCRACY IN AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID

HAVING THE MORE CONSERVATIVE FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS AND ALFRED DREGGER BECOME OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN ON THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH HE LACKS THE FIRE AND CROWD APPEAL OF FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS, HE PROBABLY REPRESENTS A BROADER BASE OF CDU AND CDU SYMPATHIZERS THAN ANY OF THE OTHER POTENTIAL UNION CANDIDATES. THE QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER, WHETHER A KOHL CANDIDACY, ALTHOUGH POTENTIALLY ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON A BROAD BASE OF SUPPORT WITHIN THE PARTY, WOULD COMPENSATE FOR HIS UNEXCITING AND SLIGHTLY PROVINCIAL IMAGE (ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON TO HELMUST SCHMIDT) EVEN IF THE PRO-CDU TREND CONTINUES. HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BONN03870
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750080-0788
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750373/aaaacnzd.tel
Line Count: 181
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HELMUT KOHL ON THE STUMP BEGIN SUMMARY: HELMUT KOHL IS WINDING UP HIS CAMPAIGN
TAGS: PINT, GE, CDU, CSU, (KOHL, HELMUT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006